



# Capital Press

## The West's Ag Weekly

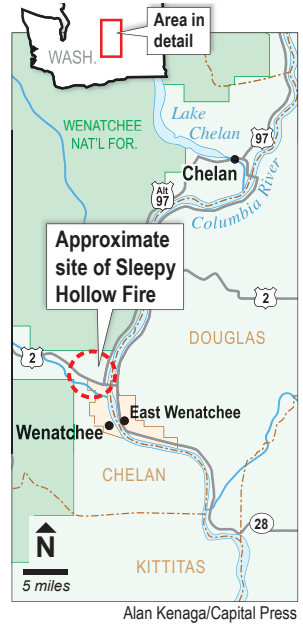


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## Wenatchee wildfire losses reach \$100 million

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

WENATCHEE, Wash. — More than two dozen homes, two major tree fruit packing plants and two other tree fruit businesses were heavily damaged or destroyed when wind blew a wildfire into Wenatchee the evening of June 28.

Losses “easily total \$100 million” and hundreds of workers employed by the companies will be out of work, said Brian Moore, a fire

spokesman and Washington State Patrol trooper.

About 24 to 28 residences were destroyed, mainly in Wenatchee’s Broadview subdivision at the north end of town, Moore said. Some were million-dollar homes, he said.

Blue Bird’s Wenatchee packing plant is probably a \$30 million loss, said Ron Gonsalves, general manager of Blue Bird Inc. of Peshastin.

“We had an organic apple line and multiple cherry lines

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A structure is shown in the Horse Lake Road area on the north edge of Wenatchee, Wash., at 8:12 p.m. June 28, shortly before fire surrounded it. The fire destroyed many homes and agricultural businesses.

Dan Wheat  
Capital Press

## More shutoff notices issued

San Francisco among latest batch of senior water right holders to receive stop-diversion orders

By TIM HEARDEN  
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — As the hot, dry summer wears on, shutoff notices to California’s most longstanding water right holders could occur on a weekly or even daily basis, state officials and farm groups warn.

Water regulators “pretty much are looking at water supply versus demand every day,” said George Kostyrko, spokesman for the State Water Resources Control Board.

The warming comes as the city of San Francisco was among the latest batch of senior water right holders south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to receive stop-diversion orders. The

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### DROUGHT STORIES

- Hydropower challenge could impact irrigators
- Drought reduces hydroelectric output
- Drought conditions take hold in Western Washington

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# BUYING LOCAL



Photos by Eric Mortenson/Capital Press  
Fernando Divina, executive chef at Oregon Health & Science University, heads a staff that feeds hospital patients 1,200 meals a day, plus many more for staff, students and visitors.

## Increased institutional food purchasing could bolster local farms

By ERIC MORTENSON  
Capital Press

PORTLAND — At Oregon Health & Science University recently, the lunch offerings included sandwiches made with organic chicken breast — locally sourced — on focaccia bread, baked locally and delivered daily. Plus salad made from local greens. Not a pre-packaged, mass-produced item in sight.

This is hospital food? Providing minimally processed, nutritious food at a hospital, where the clientele includes patients, doctors and nurses, medical students and visitors, seems like a solid idea. And OHSU, the teaching hospital that employs 13,700 people and has one of Oregon’s biggest economic footprints, was an early adopter of the practice.

The greater impact, however, could be to what a recent study referred to as “Ag of the Middle.” That is, the farmers, ranchers and processors who are too big to make a living selling solely at farmers’ markets and CSAs, but too small to compete at the commodity level.

The study by Ecotrust, a Portland



Purchasing agent Scott Cochrane, who buys food for Oregon Health & Science University, checks vegetables and herbs planted in new planter boxes on the hospital campus in Portland.

nonprofit, identified institutions as a prime market opportunity for middle-sized producers.

Ecotrust estimated Oregon’s hospitals, schools, prisons, assisted living facilities and other institutions serve 40 million meals a year.

Institutional food service de-

partments have immense buying power and purchase large quantities, the report pointed out. Even a relatively small tweak toward buying more Oregon grown and processed products would have a “significant ripple effect across the domestic food system,” the



Eecole Copen, OHSU’s sustainable foods program coordinator.

Ecotrust report said.

### Ranchers benefit

It paid off for a pair of Northeast Oregon cattle ranches. Carman Ranch in Wallowa, in partnership with McClaren Ranch, sells about 1,000 pounds of beef and bones a week to OHSU. The ranches take about five cows a week to a processor in Brownsville, 90 miles south of Portland, and sell the hospital 500 pounds of ground beef, 200 pounds of

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**“You have to commit to being OK with dealing with multiple vendors. The whole system is based on willingness.”**

Eecole Copen, OHSU’s sustainable foods program coordinator



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